

Joint Arab-Jewish agreement on Jewish Homeland, January 3, 1918

Feisal Hussein, King of Iraq and Syria agreed to Jewish National Home according to British Mandate (Israel and Jordan) in 1918. King of Iraq from 1921; eldest son of Hussein, sherif of Mecca. He led the Arab intifada against Turkey (1916-1918) and was designated king of Syria. Feisal was at first sympathetic to a Jewish Homeland from which he hoped to receive aid in building his future kingdom. He met Dr. Weizmann in Jordan (1918) and Paris (1919) where they reached an agreement on mutual aid, conditional on the implementation of British promises to the Arabs. Later, owing to his expulsion from Syria by the French (1920) and the influence of other Arab leaders, his attitude later became hostile.

By the mid-19th century, up to 100,000 people lived in Palestine, including a high percentage of Jews, whose forebears had lived there for thousands of years. In 1882, roughly 200,000 Muslims lived in all of Western Palestine.^{[1](#)} By 1918, the situation had not changed much: That was why Hussein ibn-Ali, Sherif of Mecca, and his son, King Faisal of Iraq, both endorsed and extolled the Balfour Declaration ^{[2](#)}

Hussein wrote in Mecca's *Al Qibla*, in 1918, "The resources of the country are still virgin soil and will be developed by the Jewish immigrants. One of the most amazing things until recent times was that the Palestinian used to leave his country, wandering over the high seas in every direction. His native soil could not retain a hold on him.... At the same time, we have seen the Jews from foreign countries streaming to Palestine from Russia, Germany, Austria, Spain, and America. The cause of causes could not escape those who had a gift of deeper insight. They knew that the country was for its original sons [*abna'ihī-l-asliyin*], for all their differences, a sacred and beloved homeland. The return of these exiles [*jaliya*] to their homeland will prove materially and spiritually an experimental school for their brethren who are with them in the fields, factories, trades and all things connected to the land." ^{[3](#)}

In early 1919, King Faisal, then the only recognized Arab leader in the world, executed a treaty with Chaim Weizmann adopting the understanding of the Balfour Declaration. It outlined relations between Palestine and the Arab state, recognizing the former as a National Home for the Jews, in which they should quickly settle. He wrote, "We Arabs, especially the educated among us, look with the deepest sympathy on the Zionist movement. Our delegation here in Paris is fully acquainted with the proposals submitted yesterday to the Zionist organization to the Peace Conference, and we regard them as *moderate and proper*." (emphasis added) ^{[4](#)}

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The 1919 Faisal-Weizmann treaty provided a firm foundation for League of Nations ratification of the Balfour Declaration at the San Remo Conference in 1920. The proposals covered Palestine - from the Mediterranean through the entire Galilee, up to the Litany River, hundreds of miles east of the Jordan River through all of current day Jordan, and into part of the Sinai. The League assigned Palestine Mandate administration to Britain, entrusting it to establish the National Home for the Jews. [5](#)

Agreement Between Emir Feisal Hussein and Dr. Weizman

His Royal Highness the Emir FEISAL, representing and acting on behalf of the Arab Kingdom of Hedjaz, and Dr. CHAIM WIEZMANN, representing and acting on behalf of the Zionist Organization.

mindful of the racial kinship and ancient bonds existing between the Arabs and the Jewish people, and realising that the surest means of working out the consummation of their national aspirations is through the closest possible collaboration in the development of the Arab State and Palestine, and being desirous further of confirming the good understanding which exists between them,

have agreed upon the following Articles;-

ARTICLE I

The Arab State and Palestine in all their relations and undertakings shall be controlled by the most cordial goodwill and understanding and to this end Arab and Jewish duly accredited agents shall be established and maintained in the respective territories.

ARTICLE II

Immediately following the completion of the deliberations of the Peace Conference, the definite boundaries between the Arab State and Palestine shall be determined by a Commission to be agreed upon by the parties hereto.

ARTICLE III

In the establishment of the Constitution and Administration of Palestine all such measures shall be adopted as will afford the fullest guarantee for carrying into effect the British Government's Declaration of the 2nd of November, 1917.

ARTICLE IV

All necessary measures shall be taken to encourage and stimulate immigration of Jews into Palestine on a large scale, and as quickly as possible to settle Jewish immigrants upon the land through closer settlement and intensive cultivation of the soil. In taking such measures measures the Arab peasant and tenant farmer shall be protected in their rights and shall be assisted in forwarding their economic development.

ARTICLE V.

No regulation nor law shall be made prohibiting or interfering in any way with the free exercise of religion; and further the free exercise and enjoyment of religious profession and worship without discrimination or preference shall forever be allowed. No religious test shall ever be required for the exercise of civil or political rights.

ARTICLE VI

The Mohammedan Holy Places shall be under Mohammedan control.

ARTICLE VII

The Zionist Organization proposes to send to Palestine a Commission of experts to make a survey of the economic possibilities of the country, and to report upon the best means for its development. The Zionist Organisation will place the aforementioned Commission at the disposal of the Arab State for the purpose of a survey of the economic possibilities of the Arab State and to report upon the best means for its development. The Zionist Organization will use its best efforts to assist the Arab State in providing the means for developing the natural resources and economic possibilities thereof.

ARTICLE VIII.

The parties hereto agree to act in complete accord and harmony on all matters embraced herein before the Peace congress.

ARTICLE IX

Any matters of dispute which may arise between the contracting parties shall be referred to the British Government for arbitration.

Given under our hand at LONDON.
ENGLAND, the THIRD day of
JANUARY, ONE THOUSAND NINE
HUNDRED AND EIGHTEEN.

Chaim-Weizmann.

Feisal ibn-Hussein.

RESERVATION BY THE EMIR FEISAL

If the Arabs are established as I have asked in
my manifesto of January 4th addressed to the
British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, I
will carry out what is written in this agreement.
If changes are made, I cannot be answerable for
failing to carry out this agreement.

Feisal ibn-Hussein.

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and acting on behalf of the Arab Kingdom of Hedjaz,
and Dr. CHAIM WEIZMANN, representing and acting on
behalf of the Zionist Organisation,

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لشؤونهم وحسن حكمهم
مواظبه على ما في صالحهم
تتميمه وتبليغه الى
في هذه المصادره
باسمهم

Chaim Weizmann

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If changes are made, I can
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Faisal ibn
Hussein

1. Katz, Battleground, pp. 90-115 (citing De Haas, Jacob, *History of Palestine: The Last Two Thousand Years*, New York: Macmillan, 1934), 123-127; Peters, Joan, *From Time Immemorial*, pp. 244-245, citing Dr. Carl Herman Voss, *The Palestine Problem Today, Israel and Its Neighbors* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1953), p. 13. Western Palestine (also then called Southern Syria) was considerably larger than the area that later became Israel. It is very misleading to cite their populations interchangeably, as Peters details.

2. Katz, Samuel, *Battleground: Fact and Fantasy in Palestine*, 123-127.

3. Katz, *Battleground*, pp. 125-127

4. Katz, *Battleground*, pp. 125-127

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Source: "Battleground: Fact & Fantasy in Palestine" by Samuel Katz,
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Congressman Jack Kemp

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Former US Ambassador to the United Nations, Jeanne J. Kirkpatrick

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